

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a natural language input, comprising:
  - identifying a plurality of N-best part-of-speech (POS) sequences corresponding to the natural language input;
  - identifying a likely base noun phrase (baseNP) sequence based on the N-best POS sequences identified; and
  - outputting the likely baseNP sequence.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein identifying a likely baseNP sequence comprises:
  - identifying a plurality of baseNP sequences for each of the N-best POS tag sequences; and
  - calculating which of the plurality of baseNP sequences is most likely.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein calculating which of the plurality of baseNP sequences is most likely comprises:
  - calculating a likely baseNP sequence that is most likely based on lexical information indicative of a position of words in the natural language input relative to baseNPs identified in the baseNP sequences.
4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein calculating a likely baseNP sequence that is most likely based on lexical information comprises:
  - calculating a likely baseNP sequence that is most likely based on lexical information indicative of POS tags assigned to the words in the natural language input.
5. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein calculating a likely baseNP sequence comprises:
  - calculating a likely baseNP sequence based on the lexical

information for every word in the natural language input.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the natural language input comprises a sentence and wherein calculating which of the plurality of baseNP sequences is most likely comprises:

calculating which of the plurality of baseNP sequences is most likely over the entire sentence.

7. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein a baseNP rule comprises a sequence of POS tags corresponding to words in the natural language input identified as a baseNP and wherein calculating a likely baseNP sequence comprises:

calculating a probability of POS tags and baseNP rules, given their context.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein calculating a probability of POS tags and baseNP rules comprises:

calculating the probability of POS tags and baseNP rules given n prior POS tags or baseNP rules.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein identifying a likely baseNP sequence includes:

calculating a probability of each of the N-best POS sequences given the natural language input.

10. (Currently Amended) A natural language processing system for processing a natural language input, comprising:

a base noun phrase (baseNP) identifier configured to receive a plurality of N-best part-of-speech (POS) tag sequences for the natural language input and identify a likely baseNP sequence of baseNPs corresponding to the natural language input, given the N-best POS tag

sequences.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10 and further comprising:  
a POS tagger, coupled to the baseNP identifier, receiving  
the natural language input and calculating the N-best  
POS tag sequences corresponding to the natural language  
input.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11 wherein the baseNP  
identifier is configured to identify a plurality of baseNP  
sequences for each of the POS tag sequences and calculate which  
of the plurality of baseNP sequences is the likely baseNP  
sequence.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12 wherein the baseNP  
identifier further comprises:  
a unified statistical model that includes lexical  
information indicative of a position of words in the  
natural language input relative to baseNPs identified  
in the baseNP sequences.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein a baseNP rule  
comprises a sequence of POS tags corresponding to words in the  
natural language input that are identified as a baseNP and wherein  
the unified statistical model includes a baseNP rule component for  
calculating a probability of POS tags and baseNP rules, given  
contextual information.

15. (Original) The system of claim 14 wherein the baseNP rule  
component is configured to calculate the probability of POS tags  
and baseNP rules, given n prior POS tags and baseNP rules.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the natural

language input comprises a sentence and wherein the unified statistical model is configured for calculating which of the plurality of baseNP sequences is most likely over the entire sentence.

17. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a linguistic input, comprising:

identifying a plurality of N-best part-of-speech (POS) sequences corresponding to the linguistic input;

identifying one or more base noun phrases (baseNPs) for each of the N-best POS sequences to form a plurality of different possible baseNP sequences corresponding to each of the POS sequences; for each baseNP sequence, identifying whether it is a likely baseNP sequence based on a probability of the associated POS sequence and a probability of the baseNP sequence, given lexical information indicative of a position of words in the linguistic input relative to the baseNPs identified in the baseNP sequence; and

outputting the likely baseNP sequence identified.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein identifying one or more baseNPs for each of the N-best POS sequences comprises:

identifying baseNP rules for each of the N-best POS sequences, the baseNP rules comprising a sequence of POS tags corresponding to words in the linguistic input identified as a baseNP.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein identifying whether each baseNP sequence is a likely baseNP sequence, comprises:

calculating a probability of POS tags and baseNP rules, given n prior POS tags or baseNP rules in the POS sequence.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the linguistic input comprises a sentence and wherein identifying whether each baseNP sequence is a likely baseNP sequence comprises:

identifying whether each baseNP sequence is a likely baseNP sequence over the entire sentence.

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